FOOD PRE-VUE

A summary of the food outlook especially designed to give maximum advance information to food editors to help them plan food features.

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MEAT............Production of red meat in the first quarter of 1963 is expected to be about 4 percent above the first quarter of 1962. A further gain is forecast in the April-June quarter.

Beef..........Large supplies of fed beef are in prospect for the first half of 1963. A record total of nearly 9 million head of cattle and calves were on feed January 1, 1963. Fed cattle prices were about $2 below a year earlier in mid-February. Prices are expected to continue below last year's levels throughout the rest of the first half of 1963.

Sheep & Lamb...First quarter slaughter of sheep and lamb may be about 10 percent under that of last year when slaughter ran high. Slaughter supplies during January-March were 5 percent smaller than a year earlier. Prices received for lambs during January-March will probably average about $2 above last year's prices.

Pork..........Pork production in the first half of 1963 is expected to be 3 to 4 percent larger than production in the same period last year, with most of the increase over a year earlier occurring from mid-March through June. In addition, cold storage holdings of pork on January 1 were 20 percent above a year earlier. Barrow and gilt prices at Chicago in mid-February were about $15.22 per 100 pounds--$1.50 below a year ago.

POULTRY.........Production of chicken and turkey for 1963 is forecast a little above production in 1962.

Broilers.......Supplies of broilers going to market in the first quarter will be at least 10 percent greater than in January-March 1962. The January price averaged a record low of 14.6¢ per pound. Prices in major producing areas continued below a year ago through mid-February. In the second quarter, broiler supplies will be reduced close to the 1962 level, but during this period broilers will face stiffer competition from larger supplies of pork and beef. In addition exports are likely to be lower this period because of recent trade barriers erected by the Common Market.

Turkeys........On January 1, frozen turkey stocks were at 200 million pounds, down 63 million pounds from the record of a year earlier, but 38 million greater than the 1957-61 average. Turkey production in the first half of 1963 will be down a little from January-June 1962. The carry-over of a heavy supply of turkeys in 1962 continued during April 1962, resulting in a mid-April farm price of 20.9 cents per pound, lowest April price in 20 years. April 1963 prices are expected to average a little above a year ago.

Eggs..........Egg production on February 1 was down nearly 3 percent from a year ago. The April 1962 U.S. farm price was 31.5 cents per dozen. April 1963 supplies are expected to be slightly below a year ago with prices about the same as last April's levels.

DAIRY............Milk production for the first quarter in 1963 may be slightly under output of a year ago. However, the forecast for the year is for an increase over last year's record production of 125.9 billion pounds.

VEGETABLES:

Fresh..........Supplies of most fresh vegetables in February-March are expected to be smaller than a year earlier. Substantially smaller supplies are in prospect for most tender items--such as snap beans, sweet corn, green peppers and tomatoes, which were hit hard by the December and January freezes in winter-producing areas. Supplies of hardier vegetables--cabbage, celery, carrots and lettuce--promise to be the same or larger than last year. Retail prices of most tender vegetables in February and March probably will average above those of a year earlier.

Potatoes and Sweet Potatoes...Although supplies of potatoes are smaller this winter than last winter, they are still large relative to trade requirements. Into mid-spring retail prices probably will average the same to slightly above the January level, and above the depressed prices of last year. Sweet potato supplies for the first half of 1963 will be materially larger than a year ago. Prices probably will average moderately to substantially below a year ago.

Frozen.........Frozen vegetable supplies were reduced by 103 million pounds during January to 1,180 million on February first. These supplies are 5 percent more than last year and 48 percent more than the 1957-61 average.

FRUIT:

Citrus.........Much lighter supplies of citrus fruit will be available in the first half of this year than during the same time last year. In Florida, early and mid-season oranges, tangerines, tangelos and Valencia oranges were most seriously damaged by winter freezes. However, since damage was lightest in Florida's southeastern producing area, near normal supplies of oranges and grapefruit from that area should be available. Prices will continue above year-earlier levels at least until mid-year.

Deciduous......Supplies of apples, pears, grapes and strawberries are larger because of increased cold storage stocks. Although supplies of fresh bananas were short during January because of the shipping strike, they are expected to be normal soon. Prices for most of these fruits in the first half will not differ greatly from last year's prices.

Frozen.........Orange concentrate holdings moved up to 49 million gallons by February 1, a gain of 9 million from the previous month. Frozen fruits in storage on February 1 were down 56 million from a month earlier to 472 million pounds.

The Plentiful Foods Program

The following foods will be in plentiful supply in April:
Pork, Carrots, Potatoes, Canned Freestone Peaches, Peanuts and Peanut Products, Beef, Fluid Milk, Eggs and Canned Ripe Olives.